



**Delaware Division
for the**

Visually Impaired

**The DVI
NEWS**

Winter 2004

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Director's Report

The State Budget Hearings were held November 29 for State Fiscal Year 2006 (July 2005 – June 2006). Secretary Vincent Meconi's presentation included a recommendation to increase General Funding by \$100,000 to help our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Unit to eliminate our waiting list. That number is presently 28. This is down from several months ago as we reprioritized funding, but is again growing at about two per month. In addition, Secretary Meconi has supported our request for an additional VR Counselor. We presently have two, but have over 175 consumers we are assisting. Final decisions on budget are not until June 2005. Independent Living Services (ILS) also has a waiting list that we will reduce as commitments to important education for staff are completed and vacancies are filled. For the record, there is no hiring freeze and none on the horizon.

Delaware Industries for the Blind (DIB) has done well to minimize the loss of our lucrative neckerchief contract with the Armed Forces. This was due, of course, to the end of major warfare in Iraq. One area of growth has been our Custom Products unit that through the first eight months of the year has increased sales by \$275,000. Sales efforts are led by John MacDonald (federal government sales) and Derek Alexander (local sales). Both gentlemen are visually impaired.

On another note is the creation of a \$500.00 scholarship open to high school seniors. Required will be an essay regarding the blind or visually impaired. Causes, challenges, employment opportunities, etc. could be topics.

News to DVI and all of our community is the recent announcement that I have been asked to take a new role under Secretary Meconi. On January 1, I will become Director of Medicaid. I am still in the Department of Health and Social Services, but now will be in the Division of Social Services. Replacing me will be Cindy Lovell who has 23 years of leadership experience in the Division of State Service Centers. She knows state government and has a passion for working with the people of Delaware. She has always been active with community groups and organizations, and on January 1 will bring her experience and ability to DVI. Bob Goodhart will continue as Deputy Director. Cindy and Bob along with their very capable staff will make an excellent team supporting the goals of DVI and our community.

Farewell

Though I know DVI is in good hands, I can't help but feel a little sad. I will miss my team as well as the many people I have met in our community.

Over the past three years I have made friends that I am sure will last a lifetime. These years with DVI have improved the quality of my life immeasurably. Our work at DVI is very rewarding. I am excited about the new challenges ahead, but envy Cindy and Bob as they will be continuing the collaborative effort between DVI and all of our many community partners. I thank you all for your support and friendship. You will be missed, but most certainly not forgotten. Please support Cindy and Bob and all the great folks at DVI. I know they work very hard to "do the right thing".

A Message from the Editor

DVI is pleased to bring this informational tool to you. As you will see, the information presented is not about blindness related issues only. The DVI News highlights a wide array of information that impacts the lives of all. As visually impaired citizens, we must cope with the problems and concerns

of daily life. The DVI News is not published for blind and visually impaired people; it is written for people that just happen to have a visual impairment.

If you have any suggestions for future installments of the DVI News, or would just like to make a comment, I would love to hear from you. Don't hesitate calling me at (302) 255-9805 or e-mail me at agnes.quigley@state.de.us

PERSONNEL UPDATE

Vocational Rehabilitation Unit News

By: Helen Harper

The Vocational Rehabilitation Unit welcomes its newest member, Ms. Becki Polk, as the Administrative Specialist I to the Milford Office.

Ms. Polk comes to us from DNREC and a private psychologist office in Milford with many years experience in Medical Billing and Accounting.

Among her creative talents, including parenting two teenage daughters, she also performs on stage at the Second Street Players in Milford. Perhaps you have seen her in Gypsy as "Mamma Rose", Caught in the Net, or Ten Little Indians. Additionally, she performs in dinner theater shows with Footlight Productions out of Lewes. More recently she performed in Christmas shows at the Lighthouse Restaurant in Lewes. New shows will be coming throughout 2005.

In the short time she has been with us she has proven herself to be a valuable asset to the VR team, so please do not let the Hollywood Scouts know about her performances.

DVI PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Delaware Industries for the Blind (DIB) News

By: Alan Wingrove

In October Ty Case, DIB Switchboard operator, and National Blind Employee of the Year for 2004 received his award at the annual NAEPB/NIB Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. Ty represented Delaware well as he accepted his award and recognition. In his acceptance speech he thanked all those who had helped him overcome his handicap. He was especially appreciative of his co-workers, DIB and DVI for all their assistance. "Way to go Ty"!!!!!!

DIB is having Wayne Marsh, a current employee, begin to provide existing employees with computer skills training targeted to DIB job functions and will focus on basic to advanced skills. The goal is to provide an opportunity for a DIB employee to obtain a satisfactory level of computer skills that would qualify them for a promotion to a Customer Service/Sales position or similar positions within the organization.

DIB has established a new Marketing unit, headed by Derek Alexander. This three member team will focus on expanding sales of our existing products and services through a variety of new marketing initiatives.

Congratulations go out to Javier Rios who has recently been promoted to Senior Customer Service/Sales Rep and Team Leader in the Customer Products Dept.

Renovations to DIB's showroom are now complete. A new modern work area has been created for all of our customer service sales reps. Space for two additional Customer Service/Sales Reps is available as our Custom Products Department grows. Many thanks go to Ray and Tom from the DHSS/Maintenance Dept for all their help. They did a great job!

Training Center Offers Assistive Technology Demonstrations

By: Beverly Greason

You are invited to attend demonstrations of assistive technology at the Training Centers (TC) in Milford and New Castle. Our Trainers will meet with small groups to provide information and answer questions about the features of the technology. The dates and topics are listed below. Three sessions will be scheduled at each location, from 10 AM to Noon. There is no cost to attend. Since seating is limited, please call the Training Center no later than one week before the event to register. Some events may be cancelled if no registrations are received. Directions to the sites can be provided over the phone.

The TC staff looks forward to meeting with you and sharing information about the benefits of using assistive technology designed specifically for visually impaired individuals.

Location: Biggs Building, New Castle

Session 1: Screen enlargement software

Date/Time: 3/11/05 10 AM - Noon

Registration deadline: 3/4/05

Contact: Melodye May (302) 255-9844 or Jack McCutchan (302) 255-9843

Location: Biggs Building, New Castle

Session 2: Screen reading software and "scan and read" systems

Date/Time: 4/22/05 10 AM- Noon

Registration deadline: 4/15/05

Contact: Melodye May (302) 255-9844 or Jack McCutchan (302) 255-9843

Location: Biggs Building, New Castle

Session 3: Talking “note taking” devices

Date/Time: 5/13/05 10 AM - Noon

Registration deadline: 5/6/05

Contact: Melodye May (302) 255-9844 or Jack McCutchan (302) 255-9843

Location: Milford State Service Center Annex, Milford

Session 1: Screen enlargement software

Date/Time: 3/18/05 10 AM - Noon

Registration deadline: 3/11/05

Contact: Beverly Greason or Eddie Jory (302) 422-1570

Location: Milford State Service Center Annex, Milford

Session 2: Screen reading software and “scan and read” systems

Date/Time: 4/15/05 10 AM - Noon

Registration deadline: 4/8/05

Contact: Beverly Greason or Eddie Jory (302) 422-1570

Location: Milford State Service Center Annex, Milford

Session 3: Talking “note taking” devices

Date/Time: 5/20/05 10 AM - Noon

Registration deadline: 5/13/05

Contact: Beverly Greason or Eddie Jory (302) 422-1570

DVI's Semi-Annual Employee Named

By: Agnes Quigley

On December 10, 2004, Mrs. Linda Y. Rust was named DVI Semi-Annual Employee of 2004. This prestigious award was presented to Mrs. Rust based on her outstanding performance and her unwavering commitment to the blind and visually impaired students that she serves.

As reported in the DVI News Fall edition, Mrs. Rust was honored by the Hadley School for the Blind and was presented with the Dean W. Tuttle Professional Student Award for 2004.

Congratulations!!

Reminder for Walking with a Sighted Guide

By: John Hannum

Sometimes, especially in a dark, unfamiliar place, it may be helpful for some people to walk with a sighted person as a guide.

When walking with a friend or family member as a sighted guide, grasp your guide just above the elbow in a pincer style grasp, with fingers on one side and thumb on the other.

Let him/her walk a half step ahead and a half step beside you. Don't let people push you out in front—that's scary. Ask them to let you know when you are approaching steps or doors, then to pause to let you get ready. It would be a good idea if they let you know if the steps are up or down. During the pause, you can probe for the step with your foot, but don't put any weight on it. When you

come to a narrow space, have them drop their arm behind their back as a signal for you to get behind them.

Discussing these ideas with the guide before you start will help put your guide at ease, and help you walk together safely, efficiently, and discreetly. The Division is printing a brochure about this technique and the brochure should be available by January 1, 2005. If you are unfamiliar with this technique or have any questions, please give us a call at DVI. The upstate number is (302) 255 9946, and downstate it is (302) 422 1570.

IT'S YOUR HEALTH

Eye Care America

Resource: www.eyecareamerica.org states that:

Eye Care America - Founded in 1985, is the public service foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

The Seniors Eye Care Program (SEP) helps to ensure that all eligible seniors have access to medical eye care and promotes annual, dilated eye exams. SEP raises awareness about age-related eye disease, including cataracts, provides free eye care educational materials and facilitates access to eye care.

People eligible for a referral through the program receive a comprehensive, medical eye exam and up to one year of treatment—at no out-of-pocket cost—for any disease diagnosed during the initial exam. Volunteer ophthalmologists accept Medicare and/or other insurance reimbursement as payment in full.

The Seniors Eye Care Program is designed for people who:

- Are US citizens or legal residents
- Are age 65 and older
- Have not seen an ophthalmologist in three or more years
- Do not belong to an HMO or the VA

To determine if you, a family member or friend qualify for a SEP referral call 800.222-3937 toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Cancer Treatment Funded

Resource: www.state.de.gov

Excerpts from Governor's press release

September 14, 2004

Governor Ruth Ann Minner, joined by members of the Delaware Cancer Consortium, today unveiled the nation's first program to provide free, first-year cancer treatment for uninsured residents.

The DCTP was the centerpiece of the 2002 recommendations of the Delaware Cancer Consortium (formerly the Delaware Advisory Council on Cancer Incidence and Mortality), which encompass a two-year plan to reduce the burden of cancer in Delaware. This year, the General Assembly approved Gov. Minner's proposal to double cancer treatment and prevention funding to \$10 million.

It is estimated that the program may serve more than 200 Delaware residents without health insurance who are diagnosed with cancer each year.

"While we cannot lessen the agonizing experiences of cancer, our new program can ease the financial burden of enrolled Delawareans and their families," Gov. Minner said.

Additional key initiatives announced by the Governor and the Delaware Cancer Consortium include:

- The establishment of care coordinators at every hospital statewide to navigate patients and their families through the health care system and ensure that they have access to all available services;
- A comprehensive campaign to increase screening for colorectal cancer, the second leading cause of cancer deaths in Delaware; and
- Continuing efforts to reduce the use of tobacco and exposure to secondhand smoke.

To receive an application form and instructions, interested parties should call:

Delaware Cancer Treatment Program

Phone: 1-800-996-9969

Hours: 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

The entire Cancer Treatment Program can be found at:

www.state.de.us/governor/publications/index.shtml

Large Print Prescription Bottles

Resource: www.nbc10.com

A pilot program sponsored by the Macular Vision Research Foundation is currently under way in Pennsylvania to determine the viability of the implementation of large print labeling on prescription medications. Millions of American's struggle each day to read and dispense their medications as directed by their physician. If all goes well, large print labeling as well as product information will be available upon request at no additional cost in the near future.

IN THE COMMUNITY INTEREST

Check 21 Law

Submitted by: Agnes Quigley

Resource: www.nbc10.com

On October 28, 2004, your bank may have changed the way it processes the checks you write to pay your bills. Beth McConnell of the Pennsylvania Public Interest Group reported that by mid 2005 consumers could be bouncing as much as \$7 million or more in checks and paying an additional \$170 million in fees each month.

This new law means that cancelled paper checks are a thing of the past. Law 21 eliminates float time, which is the time you think it will take the check you write to actually clear your bank.

Banks may now take a picture of your check and transmit it electronically to its destination rather than relying on ground or alternative transportation. Your check will clear in a matter of hours rather than days.

Bottom line, if you rely on the float time when paying bills, you should develop some new habits right away. Don't write checks for money that is not in your account. It's a good time to develop a new family budget that will keep you from bouncing checks.

Fire Safety for the Disabled

Resource: www.burtonfire.com

The following are some suggestions that could help save your life if a fire should break out in your home or office. Although written for the disabled in mind, most, if not all, of these suggestions could and should be applied by all.

- Make escape easy - Consider relocating your bedroom on the ground floor making escape easier.
- Make sure that smoke detectors are installed and maintained near sleeping areas. Have a telephone installed near where you sleep.
- Special alarm - If you or any member of your household is deaf or hard of hearing install a smoke alarm that uses a flashing strobe light or vibration along with the sound alarm.
- Make a Plan – Be sure that the escape plan includes everyone in the household. If you or someone you live with cannot escape alone, designate a member of the household to assist (have a backup plan in case the designee is away).
- Conduct regular fire drills to determine if everyone is able to hear and respond to smoke alarms. If someone requires additional warning or uses a guide dog, incorporate that need into the fire escape plan.
- Communicate – Post emergency telephone numbers in large print or Braille in central locations. Keep a communication device nearby. If you use a telephone (TTY) or

Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD), place it close to the bed so that communication with emergency personnel is possible should fire or smoke trap you in your room.

- Make certain that all windows open and are accessible. You may have to use them as your escape route.
 - When away from home, become familiar with the fire exits. Remember never use the elevator during a fire.
 - Finally – make sure that your home is easily identifiable in case of an emergency should emergency personnel be needed. Post house numbers directly on your home, apartment or garage. The numbers should be approximately 4” high and should NOT be in cursive style.
 - Contact your local fire department and review emergency escape plans. Honestly discuss your abilities and limitations.
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Common Sense Tips for Safe Winter Travel

By: Agnes Quigley

As anyone who has lived on the eastern seaboard knows, winter travel can be a challenge, especially if you have a visual impairment that further compromises travel. Here are some common sense tips that may help reduce your risk of injury due to those unexpected and unseen situations.

- Wear shoes/boots that have substantial soles. Avoid smooth leather or leather-like soles that are often slippery.
- Ice cleats can be placed on shoes to increase traction, and may be purchased at the Delaware Association for the Blind.
- Leaves left on streets and sidewalks pose an additional problem other than just being potentially slippery.
- Leaves as well as snow distort and possibly conceal hidden barriers (i.e. Holes, curbs, etc.)

- Before proceeding through an intersection or crossing streets, wait a couple extra seconds to be sure that all oncoming traffic has stopped and that it is safe to continue. Rain, wind and snow often muffle the sounds that warn of oncoming traffic.
 - Wear sunglasses to help reduce the glare that is often associated with snow.
 - Finally, don't be afraid to ask for or to accept assistance from passersby.
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Planning Isn't Just for the Elderly

By: Agnes Quigley

Resource: www.state.de.us/dhss/dsaapd/index.html

Planning for the future doesn't just mean saving money. Planning can be as simple as making plans for where you would like to live when you retire, or as crucial as appointing a trusted friend or relative as your power of attorney for health care decisions should you become incapacitated and unable to make decisions regarding your health care; or perhaps signing your advanced directive or living will. Do you know who can oversee all of these important issues? Do you know what an advanced directive is and where it should be kept once it has been signed? If you would like more information on these and other important topics and services, contact:

Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities
Main Administration Building
1901 N. DuPont Hwy.
New Castle DE 19720
Phone: 1-800-223-9074

I Have Nothing to Wear!

By: Agnes Quigley

Resource: www.lighthouse.org

Have you ever heard yourself saying "I can't find anything to wear?" Stop and think about it for a moment, you probably have a lot of options to pick from in your closet; you just can't put your finger on it at the moment. Below are some organizational tips and suggestions that may help you organize that black hole where you hang your clothes.

- Organize clothing into matching outfits. A suit, shirt, tie and slacks can be placed on one hanger, or tie hangers that correspond to a particular outfit can be tied together.
- Develop a labeling system with abbreviations that indicate clothing color, i.e. Y for yellow, R for red, etc. For this purpose you may want to use broad, dark lettering on tags that can easily be slipped over the hanger for easy identification.
- Keep a flashlight handy near your closet to shine a little extra light on your garment choices.
- Use drawer dividers to help organize lingerie, socks, etc. These can be organized by color.
- Finally, perhaps the most under utilized tool of all is plan ahead. Don't wait till the early morning hour when you may be barely human to try to figure out what you want to wear that day. Do a little pre-planning the night before. Have everything ready and waiting for you when you get up.

Consumer Advocacy Groups In Delaware

By: Agnes Quigley

Have you ever considered joining a service-organization? Delaware has two membership organizations whose primary focus is issues that directly impact the blind and visually impaired citizens throughout our state. Below is a brief description and contact information for each group.

American Council of the Blind (ACB)

Web Site: www.acb.org

Mission Statement: Founded in 1961, the ACB strives to improve the well-being of all blind and visually impaired people by:

Serving as a representative national organization of blind people; elevating the social, economic and cultural levels of blind people; improving educational and rehabilitation facilities and opportunities; cooperating with the public and private institutions and organizations concerned with blind services; encouraging and assisting all blind persons to develop their abilities and conducting a public education program to promote greater understanding of blindness and the capabilities of blind people.

Delaware Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired

Web Site: www.dcbvi.org

President: Suzanne Howell

Contact: Sharon Sutlic

Phone: 655-2111

Meeting: 3rd Saturday every other month

Location: Kirkwood Highway Library

600 Kirkwood Highway

Wilmington DE

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

National Federation of the Blind (NFB)

Web Site: www.nfb.org

Mission Statement: Founded in 1940 the primary purpose of the NFB is two-fold-to help blind persons achieve self-confidence and self-respect and to act as a vehicle for collective self-expression by the blind:

By providing public education about blindness, information and referral services, scholarships, literature and publications about blindness, aids and appliances and other adaptive equipment for the blind, advocacy services and protection of civil rights, development and evaluation of technology, and support for the blind person and their families, members of the NFB strive to educate the public that the blind are normal individuals who can compete on terms of equality.

NFB (Kent/Sussex Co. Affiliate)

Contact: Ms. Deborah Briddell, President

Phone: (302) 734-1492

Meeting: Luther Towers 1

Location: 430 King's Hwy, Dover DE

Time: 3rd Monday of the month 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

NFB (Northern DE Affiliate)

Ms. Lynne Sullivan, President

Phone: 652-6761

Meetings: 4th Thursday of the month

Location: 1519 Rockland Road

Wilmington DE 19810

Time: 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

DELAWARE ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

Submitted by: Linda Lauria (302) 655-2111

The Delaware Association for the Blind is a private nonprofit agency serving blind and visually impaired Delawareans statewide. We operate a store selling a large variety of items for the visually impaired including large print and talking clocks and watches, magnifiers, games, and household items. Our store is located at 800 West Street in Wilmington and is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We also offer an extensive recreation program, including trips, arts & crafts, music appreciation, and bingo. Our Peer Support Program can match you with a trained visually impaired volunteer who can provide information on available services and pointers on living with impaired vision. Our quarterly newsletter provides more detailed information on all of our programs.

You can call us at 655-2111 (1-888-777-3925 toll free from Kent and Sussex Counties) for more information and to request our newsletter.

National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI)

By: Charlene Dolgos

Web Site: www.spedex.com/napvi/

Did you know there is a national non-profit organization for parents of children with visual impairments? NAPVI is run by and is for parents committed to providing support to the parents of children who have visual impairments. Below are excerpts from NAPVI that you may find useful.

Mission Statement: NAPVI enables parents to find information and resources for their children who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities. NAPVI provides leadership, support, and training to assist parents in helping children reach their potential, and is dedicated to:

- giving emotional support
- initiating outreach programs
- networking
- advocating for the educational needs and welfare of children who are blind or visually impaired

What NAPVI Does

- Promote and provide information through workshops and publications which will help parents meet the special needs of their child (ren) with visual impairment.
- Provide an information and referral service.
- Promote the development of state and local organizations of, by and for parents of children with visual impairments.
- Provide seed money awards for establishment of local NAPVI chapters.
- Publish and disperse a quarterly publication entitled Awareness.
- Maintain a national support and information network through phone and mail correspondence.
- Increase public awareness about children with visual impairments so they are accepted by society.
- Provide workshops and conferences.
- Foster communication and coordination of services among federal, state and local agencies and organizations involved with people with visual impairments.

Annual family membership is \$25.00. The membership form can be downloaded at the website: www.spedex.com/napvi

Come Join The Fun!

The Delaware Association for Blind Athletes (DABA) is once again hosting the annual Family Skate Night.

- Where: DE Fair Grounds Ice Skating Rink
- Date: Saturday, March 19, 2005
- Location: Harrington, Delaware
- Time: 4:30 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. (skate)
- Social Hour: 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Who: the blind & visually impaired and their families.

RSVP: by March 3, 2005 to Sharon Sarlouis or Shawn Musgrove at (302) 422-1570.

New Castle Support Group Moves Meeting Location

The New Castle Support Group has now moved from Trinity Episcopal Church. Meetings are now being held at Alders Gate United Method Church. Meetings times remain the same. The address is:

2313 Concord Pike

Wilmington DE 19803

Telephone number: (302) 478-2575.

REFLECTIONS

By: Norman Kunc

Throughout history, people with physical and mental disabilities have been abandoned at birth, banished from society, used as court jesters, drowned and burned during the inquisition, gassed in Nazi Germany and still continue to be segregated and institutionalized, tortured in the name of behavior management, abused, raped, euthanized and murdered.

Now for the first time, people with disabilities are taking their rightful place as fully contributing citizens.

The danger is that we will respond with remediation and benevolence, rather than equity and respect. And so we offer you....

The Credo for Support

Do not see my disability as the problem.

Recognize that my disability is an attribute.

Do not see my disability as a deficit.

It is you who sees me as a deviant and helpless.

Do not try to fix me because I am not broken.

Support me. I can make a contribution to the community in my own way.

Do not see me as your client.

I am your fellow citizen.

See me as your neighbor. Remember, none of us is self-sufficient.

Do not try to modify my behavior.

Be still and listen.

What you define as inappropriate may be my attempt to communicate in the only way I can.

Do not try to change me, you have no right.

Help me learn what I want to know.

Do not hide your uncertainty behind a "professional" distance.

Be a person who listens and does not take my struggle away by trying to make it all better.

Do not use theories and strategies on me.

Be with me, and when we struggle with each other, let it give rise to self-reflection.

Do not try to control me.

I have a right to my power as a person.

What you call non-compliance or manipulation, may actually be the only way I can exert some control over my life.

Do not teach me to be obedient, submissive and polite.

I need to feel entitled to say no if I am to protect myself.

Do not be charitable toward me.

The last thing the world needs is another Jerry Lewis.

Be my ally against those who would exploit me for their own gratification.

Do not try to be my friend.

I deserve more than that.

Get to know me. We may become friends.

Do not help me even if it does make you feel good.

Ask me if I need help.

Let me show you how you can best assist me.

Do not admire me. I desire to live a full life that does not warrant adoration.

Respect me, for respect presumes equity.

Do not tell, correct and lead.

Listen, support and follow.

Do not work on me.

Work with me.